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MEANS OF PERPETUATING MUTUAL GOOD FEELING BETWEEN PASTOR AND PEOPLE.

SERMONS

PREACHED

SABBATH AFTER INSTALLATION,

JULY 11, 1852.

BY P. B. DAY,

PASTOR OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN HOLLIS, N. H.

NASHVILLE:

PRINTED BY ALBIN BEARD.

1852.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

Hollis, July 26, 1852.

Rev. P. B. Day :—

Dear Sir,—At a meeting of a number of the members of the E. C. Church and Society in Hollis, the undersigned were appointed a committee, to request of you, for publication, a copy of the two sermons by you delivered on the Sunday following your installation as their pastor.

You may be assured that a compliance with the above request will be highly gratifying to the people of your charge.

B. M. FARLEY.
LEONARD JEWETT.
ALPHEUS EASTMAN.

Hollis, August 10, 1852.

Gentlemen,—

I have the pleasure of acknowledging the receipt of your note, in which you were pleased to express your approbation of my discourses, preached the first Sabbath after my installation, and to ask a copy for the press. Relying upon your judgment, as to their adaptation to do good, I waive my own reluctance in giving so much publicity to what was so hastily prepared, and grant your request. Respectfully, yours,

P. B. DAY.

Messrs. Farley, Jewett, and Eastman.

SERMON.

Ephesians iv. 2.—Forbearing one another in love.

We meet together this morning, my hearers, in a new relation. I appear before you as a pastor whom you have called to minister in holy things, and you are before me as a people for whose spiritual welfare I am to labor, and in whose prosperity my own interest and happiness are intimately connected. We come together in propitious circumstances. You have, indeed, during the past week, been compelled to sever the tie that bound you to an affectionate and able pastor. Reluctantly you yielded to the relentless hand of disease which you could not unclench. Long will your sympathies follow him, and for him will your prayers long ascend. But the same day that severed those cherished ties, brought to you another upon whom you have united without a dissenting voice. We commence this relation, also, with the dews of heaven resting upon us. God, as if to set a visible seal of his approbation upon the connection, has ratified it by sending his spirit to strengthen and encourage us.

The bow of promise is now hanging over our horizon, between us and which have already fallen many drops of mercy. We have occasion, then, for gratitude in view of the auspicious circumstances in which we are permitted to enter upon our new relations. And it is natural that we should look forward with mutual hope, of many happy social and religious enjoyments in days to come. But we are well aware that such prospects are not unfrequently blasted. The providence of God is changing our circumstances; our feelings are mutable; our interests varying, and it is not uncommon that the brightest morning has a hazy meridian, and a dark, tempestuous evening. The pastoral relation, like the conjugal, has its honey-moons, when the fullness and freshness of mutual love seem too strong ever to be disturbed by the conflicting interests of future life; but frail human nature yields where it never intends. It purposes well, in the full tide of its affection, but, alas! it is overcome at a point where it least expected to be vanquished.

I am constrained to make an allusion to this unwelcome thought in this place, in order to prepare the way for some remarks which may serve as a remedy against such an evil.

There is no one thing that more deeply affects the social happiness of a people than harmony of feeling towards their minister. The position which he occupies is such that general confidence in, and respect towards him, become a common bond of union throughout the parish. If this confidence is wanting, or divided, the door is open for alienation and unhappy dissension to an equal extent. It is, therefore, a matter of great moment to every people, that they have a minister who duly respects and loves them, and

one whom they properly esteem; and having this mutual good feeling, it is a matter of equal moment that efforts be made to continue it.

To secure this, the great desideratum is to practice the sentiment in the text. We are to "forbear one another in love." To err is human. And if forbearance is not exercised, our imperfections will soon raise a wall of separation between us which cannot be broken down. If we cannot look with a charitable eye upon difference of opinion, and allow some latitude in our conduct, without severity of censure, the cords of friendship will soon be sundered. If we set up our own judgment as infallible, and allow our own wills to be inflexible, we are soon at variance, and mutual respect is gone.

I propose to state some of the ways by which mutual good feeling between pastor and people is perpetuated.

1st. *By being reasonable in our expectations and demands of one another.* The limits of our obligation and ability are fixed by the laws of nature and the circumstances of our condition. These we cannot safely transcend. It is no uncommon thing for a pastor to expect too much from his people. He frequently claims indulgences, in devotion to his secular pursuits; or in a want of interest in his calling; or in yielding to some eccentricity of character, which it would be unreasonable to expect them to grant. If he insists upon his claim, he compels them, in the end, to withdraw from him their confidence and support. On the other hand, the people may expect too much of their pastor. They are, indeed, more likely to make undue demands of him than he is of them.

There are many of his labors and trials with which, as a majority, they have little sympathy. They know but imperfectly, the exhausting nature of his pulpit preparations, and the innumerable perplexities which occupy his mind from day to day. They too often overlook the fact that he must feel for every mourner, sympathise with the sick, be anxious for every inquirer, distressed for the careless, watchful against innovations, and feel the force of every arrow that is hurled against the society. They too often regard his position as one enviable for comfort and freedom from care. They frequently speak of him as a privileged man, whose temporal wants are anticipated, and one who is called to labor but three short hours upon the Sabbath. It is not strange, if such views are entertained of ministerial duties, that unreasonable expectations are cherished, and disappointments and alienations ensue. Persons who are themselves entire strangers to intellectual pursuits, who know nothing of composition, beyond a few letters during the year, and who have no experience in managing public interests, aside from their children, are quite likely to become impatient with their minister. To cure any tendency of this character, it is sufficient for them to sit down, and put a fair estimate upon the amount of time and strength demanded to accomplish his various duties. Let them consider the mental and manual labor in preparing two discourses a week, the time necessary to read to keep up with the electric speed of the age, the time required in pastoral visits, the unceasing tax upon a pastor's sympathetic nature in his intercourse with the sick and afflicted, the necessary duties from abroad, the demands of his own family, time for relaxation, and to devote to personal

friends, and they will be tolerant, both as to the amount and character of their demands. If he is not so frequently at their dwellings as they could desire, or so well prepared upon the Sabbath as he or they could wish, or so frequently at the social religious meetings, or as considerate in all his remarks as would be desirable, these deficiencies could be overlooked. I do not pretend to say that the duties of a pastor are more difficult, or more arduous, than those of other professional men, but his station may be more difficult to fill to universal acceptance, because there are so many who claim a share in his services. Let us, then, moderate our claims by a due consideration of the relative positions we occupy, remembering to "forbear one another in love."

2d. In order to perpetuate mutual confidence and good feeling, we must *understand and allow each others rights.* There are certain privileges which belong to the pastor, and others to the people, which cannot be interchanged, much less usurped, without producing the most unhappy results. It belongs to the people to attend to the financial interests of the society, and to manage all the secular concerns of the parish, without clerical dictation, and if a pastor is so unwise as to press his views on these points, against their wishes, he soon finds it is perilous, and will sooner or later sap his influence. If he steps aside from his appropriate sphere, he will soon discern symptoms of dissatisfaction. So on the other hand, the pastor has prerogatives of which he is tenacious, and if manly, will not yield. He claims the privilege of managing his domestic concerns according to his own taste and judgment, the right of opinion on the popular and

exciting topics of the day, to judge of his ministerial duties, on what and how to preach, when to visit, and, in fine, to be himself like other men, in his appropriate sphere. If there is undue officiousness in meddling with his rights, it results in rupturing the ties of mutual respect.

But it ought to be remarked here, that extreme sensitiveness in either party, in these matters, is to be deprecated. Mutual esteem should be so strong that little deviations from the strictest rules of social courtesy will pass unnoticed. Should a parishioner, or the pastor, out of the kindness of his heart, venture a suggestion, though not strictly in his appropriate sphere, let it be gratefully received.

3d. To perpetuate mutual confidence and good feeling between pastor and people, *there must be leniency in overlooking faults.* When the pastoral relation is first formed, few faults are discovered on either side. The pastor comes with his best dress, and is quite likely to keep his failings out of sight. And as he has little opportunity to know his people, they also exhibit their sunny side to him. But time, the great revealer, sooner or later lays bare the character, and shows every defect. Then comes the trial. The pastor discovers, here and there, deception, where he expected good faith; mere hollow pretension, where he supposed was sincerity; fickleness and change, where he expected stability; and opposition, where he leaned for support. The people, at the same time, learn his weak points. Perhaps his pulpit preparations lose the freshness and pathos of his earlier discourses; novelty in manner is gone; imprudences leak out; multiplied cares dampen his ardor; in fine,

he may be to the people quite another man than when settled. What then will prevent the rupture of pastoral ties? Nothing but a large share of candor and forbearance. Perfection is not to be expected. As the acquaintance becomes familiar, the people will discover more of their pastor's faults, as well as his virtues. And they will sometimes denominate those acts faults, which he, from different taste, and different education, may deem praiseworthy. The people should not make their pastor feel that he is constantly in the crucible. Nothing cripples him more than to feel that he must be extremely cautious in all he does. Excessive prudence destroys his independence, and when that is gone, he is a weather-vane, never attempting to control public sentiment, but content simply to indicate it. He is a mere panderer for approbation; nothing risking, and too frequently nothing doing. If a people, therefore, are over nice how their minister moves, and what he says, they are taking a course to make a man whom they will despise. If he follows their apparent wishes, he will become a mere puppet, to play a part which they would be the first to condemn. The pastor must be a man after his own cast of mind; he cannot be one after any other. If he attempts to put on your dress, he will appear awkward. If you require him to say things just as you would say them; to be just as social or reserved; as liberal or economical, you are demanding more of him than you would be willing he should demand of you.

Then, again, a man cannot be like a chamelion, if he would. He cannot, to the full extent, "be all things to all men." He cannot, as he goes from house to house, assume, now *this* manner, and then *that*; putting himself in sympathy with every person; now

feeling the darkness and melancholy of an old man; then the joyousness and vivacity of youth. He cannot, unless he is a rare man, appear with the graces of a French master in the parlor, and at home among the stock and poultry of the farm-yard. Few men are made of such flexible material. Almost every one has more or less iron in his system.

4th. To perpetuate mutual good feeling in the pastoral relation, the *people should study peace among themselves.* No small part of the difficulties which arise between a pastor and people, arise from sectional divisions, or party dissensions, into which the pastor is indirectly drawn. It is next to impossible for him to avoid being classed with one side or the other. His opinions will be surmised. Though he may seal his lips, and cautiously avoid all participation in the controversy, nevertheless, his opinion will be wrung from him, and will offend one side or the other. Seldom, or never, does any considerable division arise in a parish, without reaching, sooner or later, the pastor. Sometimes he is censured for being decided, and then for being undecided. Now because he is interested in the matter, and then because he is not. If ever such divisions arise, efforts should be made to keep the pastor aloof. If it is a question between virtue and vice, he will not desire to be noncommitted; but if it is one of those incidental ruptures, growing out of questions of expediency, or sectional interest, he should be kept from all part or lot in the matter. If others differ, let him occupy a neutral position. Let not his opinion be drawn out and turned to his disadvantage. He may have an opinion of the merits of the case, but be not anxious to know what it is. He stands in a peculiar relation. He is not the spiritual

leader of a *part* of his people, but of the *whole*. He should have the confidence of the whole. Sacrifice not his happiness and his usefulness, that you may thereby punish some one to whom you are unfriendly.

5th. To perpetuate mutual good feeling between pastor and people, *we must study each others welfare*. This is a generic remedy for innumerable evils that may arise. We have only too look at a well regulated family, to see how this principle works. When the parent studies to make his children happy, and they in turn study to bless him, it is needless to enquire whether mutual confidence exists. It is as certain as light when the sun is up. I am no stickler for pastoral rights, when they are to be secured by arbitrary rules and enactments. The surest mode of securing and maintaining these rights, is for the pastor to consecrate himself to the welfare of his people. If he is willing to live for them, to spend his time and influence to do them good, he may very safely calculate upon their esteem and support. Some there may be, that will not appreciate his labors. Some may be prejudiced, others indifferent, but the great body will not fail to perceive and acknowledge his merits. His voluntary sacrifices will be treasured up in their hearts, and distil upon him the gentle dews of their grateful remembrance.

So too, on the other hand, when the people cherish a desire, and study the welfare of the pastor, they are making an investment in his heart which will reward them an hundred fold. They are preparing cheerfulness and smiles for his pastoral visits; giving him support for his exhausting labors in preparing for the pulpit; filling his soul with sympathy, to be poured out in time of bereavement; in fine, imparting

value to all his public and social performances. Nothing gives him so much strength, and contributes so much to his success, as to be assured that he lives in the hearts of his people. If at any time his faith falters, or depression comes over him, to remember that he lives in the esteem of others, will renew his strength and drive away his gloomy apprehensions. Let us not, then, be over scrupulous to confine our attentions within the medium rules of social duty; for what if we mutually make some sacrifices which our legal contracts do not absolutely require, we are laying up treasures for ourselves. Our daily attentions are cementing our hearts; though made without great inconvenience, they are, nevertheless, connecting links that bind together our interests and our happiness.

6th. To perpetuate mutual good feeling between pastor and people, there *must be co-operation in promoting the great end for which this relation was established.* The heart of the pastor *is*, or *should be*, set upon building up the cause of religion in the community where he is stationed. This is his chief aim, and he cannot be content without it. It is easy, then, to see his anxiety that those who love the ways of Zion should co-operate with him in his work; and equally easy to see how a backwardness would sadden his feelings. If he should find himself toiling alone, and his Christian brethren indifferent to his anxieties, secret complaints would arise and diminish his respect for them. He could bear neglect any where else better than here. If he is left without support in this respect, the entire end of his mission is lost.

Finally. To perpetuate mutual good feeling, we should *remember one another at the throne of grace.*

There is something in prayer, above all things, that cements Christian hearts. The author and the subject of it are bound together in indissoluble ties. Friends would seldom break the bonds that link their hearts, if they were mutually remembered around the morning and evening altar. When we bring the wants of those whom we love, daily before us, and pour out the tide of our affection for them, we are ready to bear a long time with their infirmities. Moses needed Aaron and Her to sustain his feeble hands. So, brethren, I now feel. We have before us a great mission. We are, with our households, journeying to the promised land. We shall have our spiritual foes, but we have entered into a mutual contract to aid each other in the warfare. Now let us be faithful to our trust. Let us stand shoulder to shoulder and heart to heart in the work. Let the kind feelings which now animate our bosoms, long prevail. Let forbearance, in *love*, be cherished. Let the silken cord which now binds our hearts together, never be broken. I purpose, in the fullness of my heart, to consecrate my time, my feeble talents, and whatever else I have, to your social and spiritual welfare. The prosperity of all who are dear to you, I hope to regard. The welfare of your children, I shall not forget. I shall watch their expanding minds with interest. When they go abroad, to build up a character, and to enter upon wider fields of influence, if they bless your hearts, they will mine; if they deepen the furrows upon your brow, I shall sorrow with you. And if you are called to lay them in early graves, I know the sensibilities of my heart will force me to mingle my tears with yours. In your afflictions I hope to be a sympathizing pastor. I know something of a broken heart. I know what depths of grief lie in the bo-

som of one who has committed to the grave the dearest earthly object of his love. I know, too, the soothing influence of affectionate sympathy in such an hour.

I hope also, to mingle joyously in your pleasant social circles. I shall love to participate in chaste cheerfulness, where the youthful heart loosens its cords and gives vent to exuberance of feeling. My influence, so far as it goes, shall be to encourage, at the same time to chasten and elevate social intercourse.

What is now before us, my friends, who can tell? The bow of promise is bright. But when clouds shall darken our horizon, is known only to him who knoweth the secrets of the future. It is a sad thought that forces itself upon us here, and it may be well to speak all we feel; that there are to be partings during this pastorate. If I do not leave you, you will leave me. These seats, one after another, will be vacated. Slowly, and sadly, shall we follow father, mother, sister, brother, and child, to the cold and narrow house appointed for us. There, side by side, shall we leave them to their solitary rest. The members of this church, the supporters of this society, patriarchs, and joyous youth, will be brought down to the same lonely mansions. Had I a prophet's vision, I would not dare tell who would be summoned first. Not long hence we shall all return to the bosom of that mother whence we came. There pastor and people will repose in her cold embrace, till in that distant morning, when we shall be called to meet our reward. When your under shepherd shall say to the Great Shepherd who comes to gather his fold, "Here am I and those whom thou hast given me." Then may we all hear the welcome message, "Come, ye blessed of my father," and in eternity may we in happy union consumate that love which here below only will commence.

Pastoral Visiting.

SERMON.

1 Timothy iv. 6.—IF THOU PUT THE BRETHREN IN REMEMBRANCE OF THESE THINGS, THOU SHALT BE A GOOD MINISTER OF JESUS CHRIST.

Without arrogating to myself any of the virtues which belong to a faithful minister, I propose to take advantage of the occasion, and the sanction of the apostle in this passage, to remind you of some familiar truths. I may say, at this time, what I could not so appropriately say at any other. Indeed, it is due both to myself and you, to state at the outset of our new relation, the views upon which I propose to act. And though the thoughts possess no merit for their originality, they may be profitable, as tending to harmonize our opinions on some leading points, upon which our prosperity materially depends.

1st. As to pastoral and social visiting. Next to the pulpit exercises, a minister may hope to be useful in calling upon his parishioners, from house to house. In times of bereavement, it is his privilege as well as duty, to be present, and tender the hand of affectionate sympathy. If he is respected and es-

teemed as he should be, his counsels are never so kindly received, nor is his presence ever so cheering as when the heart has been smitten. He then comes into the inner sanctuary of the soul; and the words of consolation which he brings from his own experience and the promises of his master, are cordials to a wounded spirit. So, too, when the inquirer has long groped his way in the dark, and is ready to despair, no one is hailed at the door with more joy, or is welcomed with a warmer heart than his spiritual guide. The aged saint, also, whose feet but occasionally tread the courts of the Lord, is quick to catch the tones of the pastor's voice, and the trembling, emaciated hand gives him a most cordial welcome. Pastoral visits tend to keep up an interest in the ministrations of the Sabbath, and to prepare the hearers to heed with more attention, the messages of their spiritual teacher. They serve, also, to familiarize him with the specific wants of the people, suggest to him topics for many discourses, and tend to dissipate gloomy and desponding thoughts that prey upon his spirit.

But pastors are restricted in the frequency of their visits, by other equally, or more important duties.—However strong may be their inclination, they cannot devote the greater part of their time to this work, without culpable neglect in some other department of their labors. Intelligent parishioners fully understand this. They are aware of the difficulties in the case, and are not exhorbitant in their exactions in this respect. But while this is true of the more intelligent, there are others who, for want of consideration, demand more visiting of their pastor than it is possible for him to accomplish. Their undue exactions arise from several causes.

In the *first* instance, they have no adequate conceptions of the amount of labor required to write a sermon. At the present day, it is no small effort to write a discourse, with which our congregations will be satisfied. A pastor must begin as soon as the labors of one Sabbath are over, to enquire on what theme he shall preach the next. He must, early in the week, lay out his train of thought, mature his plan, and con over the arrangement, while attending to his domestic duties, or visiting the sick and afflicted. As soon as Wednesday, if not before, he must take his pen. Then, until the end of the week, there is an incessant tax upon his mind. If he leaves his preparation, for visiting, however pleasing or desirable it may be, he comes to you with an unfinished sermon. You are dissatisfied with it, though you conceal your feelings under a cloak of charity; and he is mortified to the heart. One good sermon is more than most ministers can write in a week. One ought, occasionally, to spend twice that amount of time upon a discourse. It would be as profitable to his hearers as to himself. But there must be two sermons every week, and the frequent failure of health, and premature deaths of young ministers, will show at what expense they are written.

We sometimes hear of a minister who can visit five days in a week, and prepare his sermons on the remaining one. I can only say, such a man is to be pitied for his prodigious capacity; and his people more than himself. Such discourses are cheap wares, and if the people are satisfied with them, it is no compliment to their intelligence. If a minister can prepare a good sermon in one day, he could prepare a better one in three or four.

This want of knowledge as to the amount of labor required to write a sermon, is one reason why so much visiting is sometimes demanded of a pastor.

But there are other considerations which have their influence in this matter. One is the overlooking of the fact that clergymen need no small amount of recreation. Parishioners not unfrequently reason in this manner: I see my pastor in his garden, or interested, for an hour or two every day, in some other secular pursuit; sometimes he rides out of town, why could he not spend this time in making calls? The idea is here forgotten, that it is as much labor to visit as to study. When one has thought till his brains begin to turn; when his whole system is prostrated by long mental application, he cannot go to your dwellings, and be servicable. He cannot talk with your children, pray with the aged, sympathize with the afflicted, and have kind words for all. You care not to have him come by constraint, and answer you in monosyllables. You want some freshness and elasticity of mind. If he puts forth the effort necessary to make his calls agreeable and profitable, he loses the benefit of relaxation. This, nature demands; and if you do not indulge your minister in it, you may expect to lay him in an early grave, or compel him to change his field of labor, to save his life. And though the time may seem lost, to those whose pursuits require nothing of the kind, yet to him the alternative is premature death.

A pastor must, also, have time to *read*. How can one feed an intelligent community with knowledge, who has no time to nourish his own mind. The vessel which constantly gives out, without being replenished, is soon exhausted. Every community has read-

ing persons. There are those who have comparative leisure, and can devote no small part of their time to general information. They will not long endure a public teacher who is grossly deficient in this respect. There is no country in the world, not even our mother country excepted, where so much, in general attainments, is required of the ministry, as in America. Here, almost every one thinks and reads, and consequently knows. He who teaches such a community, must have a great variety of knowledge, in order to be competent to his task. He cannot be ignorant of the current news. He must be conversant with the politics of the country. He must glance at the popular literature of the day. He must keep himself fresh in the studies of the common and higher schools. He must be posted up in the speculations of the theological and scientific world. Especially is this true in the latter; for at this moment, science, falsely so called, is leaping rampant into the department of religion, and attempting to overturn the pillars of our faith. It proposes to control others wills; to send them on errands to the other world; to call up the pious and wicked dead, and, like the witch of Endor, to converse with patriarchs and prophets, and make them speak through mysterious jostlings and rappings. The pastor must know something of the premises on which these assumptions are founded. He must have time to examine them, or he will be jostled himself from his faith, and carry others with him.

The pastor has, also, other duties to perform; duties arising from his connection with local and state associations, conference of churches, occasional labors from abroad, and perhaps, to a limited extent, with the press. The varied interests of the society require

studying and planning. His own family and personal friends claim a share in his attentions.

In view, therefore, of his multiplied cares, it ought to be sufficient that you see your pastor once a year. And should some families escape his attention for a longer period, it should not be regarded as a delinquency. Circumstances may absolutely forbid his calling, in some instances, even so often as that. If your minister calls more frequently on some of his flock than on others, he is not to be charged with partiality. He cannot, from the nature of the case, be equally familiar with all. Proximity of residence, business transactions, and a greater amount of sickness and affliction, to say nothing of other considerations, will prevent a perfect equality of intercourse with the families of ones charge.

I dwell longer upon this point, because it is one where no little sensibility is sometimes manifested. Families really believe themselves slighted, when there is no foundation for it; and not unfrequently a pastor receives a no very unmeaning hint of their suspicions, which a little more consideration would have suppressed.

Here allow me a word as to the frequency with which the *sick* should be visited. When we are sick, it is pleasant to know we are remembered by those whom we love. A kind pastor will desire, as often as may be, to be present, and help an afflicted family bear their sorrow. But his interviews with the sick should be regulated with discretion. Friends should be considerate in urging them. In case of great weakness, high nervous irritability, or deliriousness, a pastor, however tender may be his manner, should seldom enter the sick chamber, unless by special re-

quest of the sufferer. By his calls he may assure the family they are not forgotten in his sympathies. If the disease is not acute, a short interview may be both pleasant and profitable.

2d. I have stated the amount of labor necessary to prepare a sermon. I wish to say a word as to the character and style of a discourse. Let it be premised that in our congregations there is a great variety of taste and capacity, and in order to the highest success in preaching, sermons must have a variety somewhat commensurate. Some want every period shaped by the rules of Blair. They crave a sweet, mellifluent voice, whose tones fall upon the ear like the mellow responses of the evening vespers. A plain, naked truth, Saxonly expressed, almost raises them from their seat. On the other hand, there are old Puritans, who desire nothing better than good common sense, expressed in the simplest language of their mother tongue. As for the flowers of rhetoric, they eschew them as their English fathers did tawdry ornaments upon their dress. They want to see the naked iron and steel, in a Sabbath discourse, and not the sword, muffled in an elegant scabbard. Some would have a sermon enlivened by an occasional vein of wit; others would never forgive the minister who should cause a smile. Some want logical conclusions; others warm and pathetic declamation.

Then as to sympathy with the *doctrines*, there is as great a diversity as there is in style. Some desire a discourse on divine sovereignty once a month. They regard it as the spinal column of the theological system, and all other doctrines as separate nerves radiating from it. Others are pained to hear the subject

introduced, and would receive cooly the pastor who should frequently preach upon it. Some desire a frequent discussion of the exciting topics of the day; others think there is neither law nor gospel in them. There is, also, as great a variety of opinion as to the manner of delivering sermons, as there is about the style and matter. Some desire a plain, easy mode of uttering ones thoughts; others demand noisy, boisterous eloquence.

Now, one who will duly consider this great variety of opinion and taste, embraced in almost every congregation, especially in the country, where tastes cannot be classified, as in the city, will perceive the difficulty in pleasing all. To-day the minister aims at instructing and interesting one class of his hearers; next Sabbath he aims at another. Now he preaches on the elective love of God; then on the duty of man to make his calling and election sure. Now on faith; then on works. Now on this vice; then on that virtue. With every one of this great variety of discourses, each hearer cannot be equally well pleased. Still more, a sermon which is received with the highest degree of approbation by some, will give mortal offence to others. How, then, is a pastor to please all? Only by "giving to each a portion in due season." If one hearer finds himself unedified, he may enquire whether his neighbor, whose rights are equal to his own, may not have a feast. If one honestly believes the discourse to be true only by limitations, he is bound to receive what is true, and to give his minister credit for sincerity in the rest. In forming an opinion as to the adaptation of a discourse, put yourself in the place of the pastor, with all interests before you, and judge from that position. If he is

more pointed and pungent in his appeals, or more tender than suits your taste, consider there are some who need it.

3d. A single word as to *religious meetings*. The Sabbath is the great day appointed by God, for public worship, and the main reliance should be placed upon it as a means of grace. But long experience has sanctioned the practice of more social meetings. The spiritual interest of the church demands a meeting of conference at some convenient time during the week. Christians need to become acquainted with each others sympathies ; secular cares need to be interrupted ; mutual exhortations need be given ; the state of religion needs to be inquired into ; and united prayer ought to ascend. These ends are all accomplished by a social religious meeting. The frequency of these meetings should depend upon the interest manifested in their attendance. Ordinarily one a week, at a convenient time and place, is as many as the church at large are willing to sustain. An occasional lecture or conference meeting, aside from this, may be had in remote parts of the town, to depend upon the time and strength of the pastor, and the interest manifested in their attendance. The responsibility of sustaining these meetings, depends mainly upon the church. Others are invited to attend, the pastor is expected to be present when in town, but the meeting is to be sustained, in the main, by the people of God. They are to be present, to hear, to speak, and to pray. Attendance on this meeting should be one of the regular duties for which every Christian should lay his plans.

4th. As to the course which a minister should

take in relation to *political* questions. Good men in the ministry differ on this subject. Some believe a minister is as much bound to show his principles, and exert his influence at the polls as in the pulpit. They say political questions are frequently based upon moral questions, and as a guardian of public morals, a clergyman is bound to unite with his fellow citizens in promoting what he really believes to be for the public good. As he has an opinion, he ought like others to express it. Furthermore, it is said, if clergymen disfranchise themselves, the state will soon disfranchise them.

On the other hand, others, while they admit that clergymen are sometimes morally bound to sustain a political measure ; while they concede, our ministerial fathers were right, in pledging with other patriots, their sacred honor and lives, to the cause of the Revolution, they question the expediency, under ordinary circumstances, of mingling with their fellow citizens at the polls. Though a minister may thus accomplish a public good, it is said, also, he may do a public injury. If, by assisting to put a ruler into office, he put himself beyond the confidence of a number of his own flock, the evil may more than counterbalance the good. As to the relative force of these arguments, every pastor must be his own judge. As to myself, I am no enthusiastic partisan. If, viewing the matter in the light of expediency, I should, at times, relinquish a right which I claim in common with other citizens, let it not be attributed to any want of independence ; and if, at other times, the right should be exercised, no sensible man will, I am sure, complain. A single word as to the propriety of allusions to political topics in the desk. Political ques-

tions are sometimes inseparable from great moral questions. Temperance and slavery, at the present time, have a double aspect; one appealing, most strongly, to the tenderest sympathies of the heart, and affecting, in the highest degree, the social happiness of man; and the other, a mere board on which to play a political game. The same was true, not many years since, in relation to the Sabbath, when the question of the Sabbath mail was discussed. No well wisher of society would desire his minister to seal his lips on the moral aspect of these, and similar questions. And though, in the present attitude of these questions, he cannot speak of their moral bearing, without suggesting to every mind their political connections, he is not to shrink from an open and frank avowal of his sentiments, even if there be a partisan nerve that is a little chafed. An intelligent community will discriminate on this point. They will not put down their minister as a political partisan, because he, at times, rebukes an evil which the state feels compelled to consider.

5th. While I shall aim, at times, to present the Christian doctrines in a systematic form, I shall aim, more frequently, to present and enforce their practical bearing. Doctrines are important. They are the foundation out of which grow all our practical conclusions, and no Christian can feel or act intelligently in his profession, without a clear and discriminating view of the premises on which duties are based. At the same time, one of the great ends of preaching is to apply and enforce those elementary truths to the practical duties of life. The bones of the human system are the support of all the delicate covering with

which they are surrounded. But to understand the anatomy of the skeleton, is but one part of the knowledge requisite to preserve the body in health; and the medical teacher who confines his instructions to the diseases of the bones, and their remedies, gives his pupils a superficial view of his science. So of him who teaches the greater science of salvation. He must do something more than exhibit the pillars of his faith. He must show the elementary principles of the Bible, and point out their relation to the multiplied duties of life. He is to instruct, encourage, rebuke, and persuade, if, by any means, he may save some, and lead them to adorn their profession. In all this, he is to be sustained by some doctrine of the holy Scriptures. He is to expose the secret sins of the heart, the current vices, and the numerous forms of wrong doing, which lurk in a thousand hiding places; and in every rebuke, he is to say, "thus saith the Lord."

Finally. Allow me in a thought or two on our duty to benevolent institutions. No people can expect to prosper, who are indifferent to the prosperity of these enterprises. They call out the best feelings of the heart; they enlarge our views; they quicken our sympathies; give occasion for many pleasant social gatherings; call into action the members of the church, and, in various ways, have a bearing upon the intelligence and liberality of a community. Had I no other desire than your ultimate temporal prosperity, I could not fail to spread before you, from time to time, the moral wants of our race. There is something in the contemplation of the great human family, that expands the soul; something that gives nobleness and elevation

of character to a people, beyond any other influences. And were you desirous of training your children for great and enobling enterprises; to rule empires, or settle the destiny of nations, what better primary school could be found, than the school of missions for this end? Let them be conversant with the views of those men who have long directed our great benevolent institutions, and they will be found not less valuable, as the means of expanding their minds, than the maxims embodied in Wheaton or Vattell. There will be few narrow minded persons among a people who contribute liberally to the spread of the gospel. Beside, a generous liberality gives energy and vitality to the piety of the church. It furnishes motives to action, and prevents a stagnation of the affections. I am frank to say, therefore, as I desire your elevation in moral and intellectual character, and the strengthening of your piety, I shall not fail to keep you informed of the progress made in the various causes of benevolence, and shall endeavor to stir you to duty on these points.

I have made, freely and frankly, these suggestions, that, at the outset of our new relation, you might understand the general course of conduct I propose to adopt. I hope to be found, in the future, consistent with these views; and, as they are such as I trust will commend themselves to your judgment, I shall rely upon your co-operation in carrying them out.

I do not feel myself an entire novice in my work. I have studied, and I hope not uselessly, my duty as a pastor, for years. But as I am among a new people, one with whose sympathies I am not familiar, I may, at times, misjudge, and shall need your forbear-

ance and your prayers. With great confidence, however, in your intelligence and kind feelings, I commit my earthly happiness, so far as I am dependent upon human aid and sympathy, to your hands. It is for you, in a great measure, to say whether I and my family shall enjoy life. If you are charitable to my failings; if you throw around me your shield, in the time of my perplexity and trouble; if you can regard me as your friend, and worthy of your confidence, then, with the blessing of Heaven, I shall be happy; my family will be happy; you, in your society relations, will be happy. Together shall we tread the checkered path of life, and be sources of mutual enjoyment. If our relations are otherwise; if mutual confidence and affection are wanting, our condition will be one of endurance for a short season, and will soon terminate in the rupture of our cherished ties. There is no earthly boon like that of one who is entrenched in the affections of a confiding people; and there is scarcely any blessing greater for a people, than to be harmonious and confiding in a pastor. Then let each study the welfare of the other; by kind feelings and kind acts, let us smooth, for each other, the rugged pathway of life, and scatter in it enjoyments as we tread together the vale of tears.